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Ministry of Advanced Education

NEW DEGREES EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES IN HEALTH CARE

BURNABY – Three new health science degrees will be offered at Simon Fraser University, expanding public health career opportunities for students and helping to fill vacancies in the health-care system, Burquitlam MLA Harry Bloy announced today.

"These new degrees build on Simon Fraser University's commitment to health research and education, while graduates of the new programs will fill an important gap in B.C.'s health-care system," said Bloy. "The Province is the main employer in the health field, so we regularly consult with the Ministry of Health in the development of new programs to ensure our employment needs and the needs of our students are met."

The degree programs will allow students to pursue careers in public health or focus on academic research. Unlike traditional medical intervention that looks at individual patients, this area of study examines the risk factors in population groups and how disease can be prevented through diet, exercise and vaccination programs. The new degrees include a bachelor of arts in health sciences, a bachelor of science in health and a master of science in population and public health.

"Our students have asked for quality education and greater choice," said Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell. "Approval of new degrees provides more choice for students to help them achieve their educational goals without leaving the province, and complements our plan to expand our post-secondary system by 25,000 seats."

New degrees at public and private post-secondary institutions in the province must meet the established criteria under B.C.'s degree quality assessment process, including a 30-day peer-reviewed period for degrees proposed by public post-secondary institutions, and be approved by the Minister of Advanced Education.

"We are all very aware of the challenges facing our health-care system," said Dr. Michael Stevenson, president and vice chancellor of SFU. "By focusing on health promotion and disease prevention at the systemic level, these new programs will contribute significant expertise to support and develop a more sustainable approach to public health care."

Since 2003, more than 100 undergraduate and graduate degrees have been approved. B.C. is improving its competitiveness and productivity through education and skills training, part of government's Pacific Leadership Agenda.

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